

To: Grevatt, Peter[Grevatt.Peter@epa.gov]; Thompkins, Anita[Thompkins.Anita@epa.gov]
From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Thur 6/9/2016 1:15:51 PM
Subject: Hoosick falls

Family farm struggles with PFOA contamination

By Lindsay Nielsen

June 8, 2016

NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt. (NEWS10) – Issues of PFOA water contamination in multiple Capital Region communities have raised many questions for area residents over the last few months. Now some are questioning what impact the contamination has on the food people are growing, selling, and eating.

At The Touch of Peace Farm in North Bennington, all signs pointed to a profitable spring.

“We did it right. It was going to be a great year, a great spring,” said Jen Varga, co-owner of the farm. “It was perfect. We had just done it all right”

Then Varga received test results in March showing that the water source she and her husband use to irrigate their three acre all-natural farm had PFOA levels far above acceptable levels.

Vermont’s PFOA advisory level is 20ppt. Tests at the Touch of Peace Farm showed PFOA levels at 86 ppt.

Jen Varga says they now can’t sell their crops, and didn’t grow their normal crop this spring because of the PFOA contamination. The farm’s fields and greenhouses are now empty.

“Through no fault of our own bam guess what you can’t work today. You can’t do this anymore.”

The farm usually sells garlic, asparagus, tomatoes, lettuce, and other produce to Bennington College and the local community. Their products even make it one state over into New Jersey.

They can’t sell their eggs either. Varga says the DEC told them there could be contamination in the chickens as well.

“We feed really good quality food so that our eggs are the best quality that we can make, and you know we’re not growing any crops,” said Varga. “I couldn’t afford to go out and buy plants from another farmer that was safe, so it just stopped.”

The Touch of Peace Farm sits a mile and a half from the source of the PFOA contamination, the old Chemfab site.

Varga says it will be hard for her farm to compete with other farms which happen to be located farther from the contamination.

"When people can go a few miles down the road to a couple of the other farm stands that are there that are not within this mile and a half that don't have this stigma attached to them they're going to do that and I can't blame them," said Varga. "I wouldn't eat, I don't eat anything here now."

Varga says they're now waiting for answers, and the results of soil testing that was done at the farm. Anthony Varga isn't sure they can wait for too long.

"For us I don't have the time to wait until they can fix it," said Anthony Varga. "We've read things that says it's a 90 year half life. So in 45 years it's only going to be half that in our soil. That's not acceptable."

"The thing that you've been working on for the last six years is now just been yanked out from underneath you," said Varga. "We had so many questions that nobody really knows the answers to because it's such a new thing that they don't have a lot of research on which we understand. but for us it's our livelihood."

WNYT

Water Warriors hoping to help PFOA aftermath

John Craig

06/08/2016

HOOSICK FALLS – Those affected by the ongoing water crisis are trying to find ways to help themselves and their neighbors. There were two meetings in the village Wednesday night. At one, a group of women who call themselves "Water Warriors" introduced a natural solution. It's crystal clear, artesian water from a confined aquifer dubbed Indian Springs.

"We just want to make point that there is another option here that may possibly be a good avenue to pursue and it's right here in our own backyard," said Michelle O'Leary.

It's sourced from six springs which can pump between 30-50 gallons a minute, she said. Hoosick Falls has filtration systems in place and the water there has been deemed safe to drink by state and local officials. However, some remain skeptical. During the "Hoosick Rising" quarterly meeting, the "warriors" brought their bottle to Brown's Brewery. It is now offered as "natural artesian pet water," good for pets but not cleared for human consumption until it clears more government red-tape.

"Right now we're doing pet water," Kimberlye Knapp said. "We can't do water for human consumption right now because there's a lot of stuff we have to go through, through the

department of health."

"Hoosick Rising" began as a new approach to healthy economic development while keeping and honoring the village's heritage. But in the wake of the PFOA crisis, it has taken on new concern and direction.

"We're going to give the water to Hoosick Falls residents that have pets that have been affected by PFOA," Knapp said.

"We are totally A-political," said Nancy Tucker. "Our only goal is to offer and further initiatives to support offering this wonderful water to the public."

And across town at the Hoosick Falls Country Club there was a closed-door session with another law firm, Williams Cuker Berezofsky LLC with offices in Philadelphia and Cherry Hill, NJ. A class-action suit with other attorneys could be filed in federal court as early as this Friday, according to sources.

WRGB

Calls growing for hearings on Hoosick Falls crisis

By Greg Floyd Wednesday, June 8th 2016

ALBANY--With PFOA blood tests arriving in mailboxes in Hoosick Falls, the calls are growing louder for state hearings into how and why the water crisis grew to where it is now.

On Tuesday, one of those Senators called Hoosick Falls the number one environmental issue in the state.

Now that people there and in Petersburg are learning that they have PFOA levels in some cases hundreds of times higher than the average American, some are wondering why is there no action from the third floor of the State Capitol.

Others wonder why there are no hearings from the lawmakers who are meant to look out for the people of New York.

Tom O'Mara is the chairman of the environmental conservation committee.

Senator O'Mara says he wants to work with the health committee chair, but the Assembly leadership has made it clear it's not holding hearings anytime soon.

###

